

Zoo Outreach Organisation blitzing Tamil Nadu with Wildlife Conservation Education Programmes for Kids ! R. Marimuthu Programme Director Sally Walker and R. Marimuthu

Zoo Outreach Organization is a unique, dynamic and productive conservation, research, education, and wild animal welfare NGO. ZOO was founded in 1985 by Sally Walker with funds and mandate from the then Department of Environment, Government of India. The organization was to i) provide technical and educational support for zoos, ii) enhance the public image of zoos, and iii) liaise between local, national, international interests for the benefit of Indian zoos. ZOO also lobbied for organizations and legislation affecting zoos and captive wild animal welfare in zoos.

One of Zoo Outreach Organization's main foci is wildlife conservation education since the inception of the organization from 1985. ZOO develops and supplies education materials free of cost to zoos; forest departments, other NGO's, schools, colleges and universities, museums and volunteers through its education network entitled ZOO EDUCATOR NETWORK ZEN. In addition, we have been conducting animal- or issue-based teacher-training workshops in South and Southeast Asia. Using this expertise, now ZOO has a plan to conduct extensive education programmes in Tamil Nadu over the long term. From from time to time we had received requests for conducting education programmes and now we would like to make it a standard activity.

Using our expertise and educational materials, ZOO has developed a plan to conduct extensive education programmes in Tamil Nadu over the long term on wildlife conservation by using ZOO's various educational themes. The objective of these programmes is to teach wildlife conservation targeting school children, teachers and community people thereby bringing them closer to nature, which would create interest and compassion for wildlife.

The proposed programmes will be conducted at the education institutions, with community people and others those who are interested. ZOO has a plan to conduct 8 programmes in a month and about 100 in a year with 40-50 participants per programme. The duration of the programmes will be half-day to full day programme with an agenda for time management. The medium of teaching is in Tamil language.

Active learning techniques will be used in the sessions, which help create emotionally charged experiences among the participants. Some of the items in the above ZOO education themes will be translated into Tamil in order to insure understanding by the rural audience. Evaluation will be carried out to measure the level of audience knowledge and the effectiveness of our teaching.

Objective: To teach about wildlife conservation targeting school children, teachers and community people thereby bringing them closer to nature, which would create interest and compassion for wildlife.

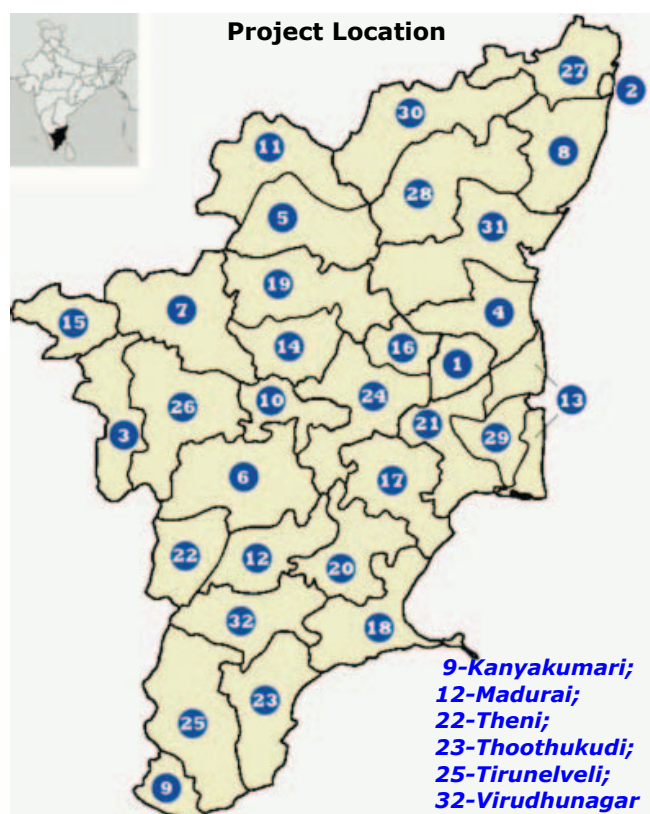


Methodology: Tamil Nadu has 32 districts and these may be covered in 5 years time. Six (6) southern districts will be selected for the first year: Thirunelveli, Kanniyakumari, Thoothukudi, Virudhunagar, Madurai and Theni.

Focal persons: District National Green Corps (NGC) coordinators, Chief Education Officers and District Education Officers, District Forest Department, Colleges and Schools & its Eco clubs, NGO's, people trained by ZOO and ZOO's EDUCATION NETWORK members.

Financial support (to be found): Department of Environment-Tamil Nadu, Tamil Nadu State Council for Science Technology, Industries, Management of Education institutions and National Green Corps Coordinators.

Programme Plan: The Southern part of Tamil Nadu which covers 9 districts, e.g., Madurai, Theni, Ramanathapuram, Sivagangai, Dindugal, Thoothukudi, Virudhunagar, Thirunelveli and Kanniyakumari. Out of these we will cover 6 districts



in a year and they are Thiruneveli, Kanniyakumari, Thoothukudi, Virudhunagar. Madurai and Theni other three districts will be taken on coming years. The theme of the programme can be any one of the following for each programme, decided by the institution requesting the programme:

ZOO Themes

1. Amphibians
2. Go Gharial
3. Turtle and Tortoises
4. Tiger
5. Plants for Life
6. Vultures
7. Getting along with Elephants (Tamil and English)
8. Monkey Manners (Behaviour) (Tamil and English)
9. Bats
10. Primates
11. Pollinators
12. South Asian Bears
13. Daily life wildlife
14. Live more simply (addresses climate change)
15. Bats and Rats
16. Zoo Patrol Kit
17. Conservation Conscious and Conservation Careless zoos
18. Freshwater Biodiversity
19. Hoolock Gibbon
20. Invertebrates

Programme execution: These six districts have 48 Taluks. Two programmes may be conducted in each Taluk. In twelve months time about 100 programmes could be conducted. Programmes also can be done on important wildlife, environment and animal welfare related days both national and international such as Animal Welfare Fortnight, Earth day, World Environment Day, World Forestry Day, Van Mahotsav, World Wetlands Day, Wildlife Week. The maximum number of participants in each programme is best at 40-50 persons. In a year we aim to teach about 5000 persons.

Programme evaluation: The participants will fill an evaluation form both before and after the programme to understand their level of knowledge enhancement and the effectiveness of the programme.



Bat awareness event at the ISHA home school, Coimbatore during wildlife week 2007.



Live more simply programme at VOC park mini zoo during Wildlife Week 2010 for the corporation school students



World Environment Day 2011 programme at PSGR Krishnammal School on the theme Forests: Nature at your Service.